

MASSACHUSETTS RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

LYRE-LEAVED ROCK CRESS

(Arabis lyrata L.)

DESCRIPTION

Lyre-leaved Rock-cress is a small, wide-branching, perennial or biennial, tufted herb. The slender stem is hairy at the base and smooth above, and grows from 3.5-13" (9-30cm) tall. Stem leaves are narrow, untoothed, and $\frac{1}{2}$ -1" (1.25-2.5cm) long; basal leaves are hairy, lobed or lyre-shaped, and 1-2" (2.5-4cm) long. Flowers are four-petaled and pure white. The linear pods are $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$ " (9-15mm) long. Flowers appear from mid-May through June.

SIMILAR SPECIES IN MASSACHUSETTS

Arabis lyrata differs from the other species of Arabis found in Massachusetts by its pure white flowers, its smaller size, and wingless seeds. The other Arabis species in the state have yellowish-white, greenish-white, or pinkish-white flowers, are usually 1-4' in height, and have longer pods (2-4") than A. lyrata.



Britton, N.L. and N.A. Brown. An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada. Dover Publications, Inc. 1970 reprint of 1913 ed.

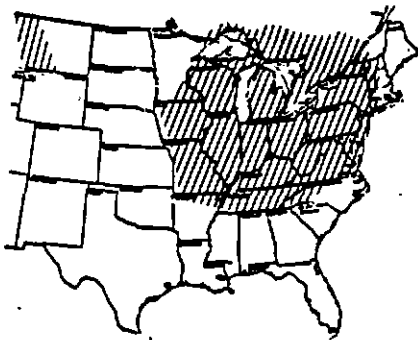
HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

Lyre-leaved Rock-cress inhabits southern calcareous cliff communities, preferring gravelly or sandy calcareous soils, usually on ledges, and cliffs open to sunlight. Species found co-occurring with this Rock-cress include Saxifraga virginianensis (Early Saxifrage), Polypodium virginianum (Common Polypody), Cystopteris fragilis (Fragile Fern), Campanula rotundifolia (Harebell), and Aquilegia canadensis (Columbine).

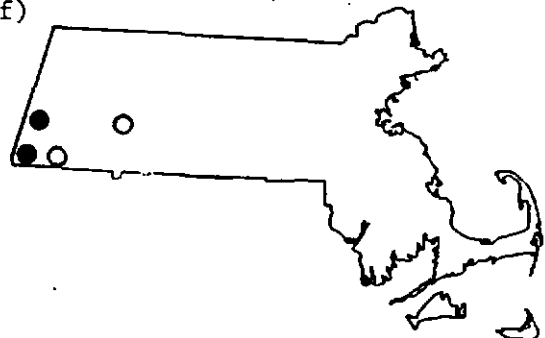
RANGE

Lyre-leaved Rock-cress ranges from Vermont to Ontario and Minnesota, south to North Carolina, northern Georgia, and Missouri. Plants of the western variety, with glabrous (smooth) leaves and stems, are found from Alaska to Washington, and scattered east to Montana and the Great Lakes.

(continued overleaf)



Distribution of Arabis lyrata



● Verified since 1978
○ Reported prior to 1978

Distribution in Massachusetts by Town

LYRE-LEAVED ROCK-CRESS (continued)

POPULATION STATUS

Lyre-leaved Rock-cress is considered "Threatened" in Massachusetts. Currently, (1978 to present) only 2 occurrences have been reported; two other historical occurrences have been recorded. Its occurrence in Massachusetts has always been limited due to a restricted amount of suitable habitat. Vegetational succession of its habitat poses a threat to its continued existence.